

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 AF-10 ARA-14 EA-12 EUR-12
NEA-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-10 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 /137 W
-----089917 180837Z /11
R 171923Z FEB 78
FM USMISSION GENEVA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6154
INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 GENEVA 02546

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: UNHRC, SHUM
SUBJECT: 34TH HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION: US STATEMENT ON
AGENDA ITEM 6 (PROGRESS REPORT OF THE AD HOC WORKING
GROUP ON VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA)
AND AGENDA ITEM 7 (ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
IN SOUTHERN AFRICA OF CERTAIN FORMS OF ASSISTANCE)

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF SUBJECT STATEMENT GIVEN BY USREP
MEZVINSKY FEBRUARY 17, 1978

QTE. THANK YOU, MR. CHAIRMAN,

WE HAVE READ WITH GREAT INTEREST THE REPORT OF THE AD
HOC WORKING GROUP ON VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN
SOUTHERN AFRICA. WE WISH TO COMMEND THE WORKING GROUP
FOR THEIR EFFORTS TO PROVIDE THE COMMISSION WITH A
DETAILED PICTURE OF THE VIOLATIONS OF SEVERAL BASIC KINDS
OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN SOUTH AFRICA, NAMIBIA AND ZIMBABWE.
IT COULD SERVE VERY USEFULLY AS A MODEL FOR REPORTS ON
OTHER COUNTRIES WHERE THERE ARE SITUATIONS OF GROSS
VIOLATIONS OF INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED HUMAN RIGHTS.

THE REPORT IS A SADDENING DOCUMENT. IT IS DISHEARTENING
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TO READ IN INSTANCE AFTER INSTANCE, OF THE CAPACITY FOR
INSTITUTIONALIZED AND SYSTEMATIC INJUSTICE. IT WOULD BE
IMPOSSIBLE TO ATTEMPT TO RANK WHICH OF THE DIFFERENT
VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ARE MORE SERIOUS. INDEED,
IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THE ENJOYMENT OF ALL HUMAN RIGHTS,
WHETHER ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, CULTURAL, POLITICAL OR CIVIL,
IS ESSENTIAL TO HUMAN DIGNITY. WHAT EMERGES IS THAT THE

BLACK AFRICAN POPULATIONS HAVE BEEN DELIBERATELY DENIED THE ACCESS TO FULL ENJOYMENT OF A BROAD SPECTRUM OF RIGHTS. THE DEPRIVATION OF ONE TYPE OF RIGHT INEVITABLY DIMINISHES THE ENJOYMENT OF ALL OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS. BY VIRTUE OF OUR OWN HISTORY, AND OUR INSTITUTIONS, WE ARE STRONGLY ATTACHED TO THE CONCEPT OF DUE PROCESS UNDER LAW. A DEPLORABLE SITUATION EXISTS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA AND THIS HAS BEEN WELL KNOWN FOR SOME TIME. WE ARE APPALLED BY THE CONTINUING EVIDENCE OF THE CONSISTENT DISTORTION OF LAW BY OFFICIAL AUTHORITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA, NAMIBIA AND ZIMBABWE. DUE PROCESS OF LAW HAS BEEN PERVERTED FROM AN INSTITUTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF INDIVIDUALS AND THE SOCIETY THEY COLLECTIVELY FORM, INTO A WEAPON TO INTIMIDATE THEM.

THERE IS PERHAPS ONE ELEMENT MISSING FROM THE REPORT. THAT IS A CONSIDERATION OF THE CORROSIVE EFFECT OF RACIAL OPPRESSION ON THOSE WHO PRACTICE IT. WE BELIEVE THAT THE OPPRESSOR BECOMES HIS OWN VICTIM AND HIMSELF A PRISONER OF THE VERY APPARATUS OF INSTITUTIONALIZED TERROR AND FEAR HE HAS ERECTED TO MAINTAIN CONTROL. THIS IS THE CASE IN SOUTH AFRICA AS WELL AS EVERYWHERE ELSE IN THE WORLD WHERE THE STATE EXISTS TO SUBDUCE RATHER THAN TO SERVE ITS PEOPLE.

MY GOVERNMENT HAS EXPRESSED ITS GRAVE DOUBTS REGARDING
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THE RESULTS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT'S REPORT ON THE CAUSES OF MR. STEVE BIKO'S DEATH. WHILE IT IS A TRAGIC FACT THAT MR. BIKO IS ONLY ONE OF MANY WHO DIED WHILE IN PRISON IN THAT COUNTRY, HE WAS A MAN OF GIANT MORAL STATURE WHO HELD OUT THE PROMISE OF SAVING SOUTH AFRICA FROM SELF-DESTRUCTION. IT WOULD SEEM THEREFORE A PARTICULARLY APPROPRIATE GESTURE OF RECOGNITION FOR THIS COMMISSION TO LOOK INTO THE POSSIBILITY OF SUPPORTING SOMETHING LIKE THE AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PROPOSAL TO EXAMINE ANEW THE EVIDENCE PRESENTED AT THE INQUEST INTO STEVE BIKO'S DEATH. IT MIGHT HAVE THE EFFECT OF ELIMINATING OR AT LEAST REDUCING THE NUMBER OF SEEMINGLY INEXPLICABLE DEATHS OF THOSE DETAINED ON POLITICAL GROUNDS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

WE WISH THERE HAD BEEN A SUMMARY STATEMENT IN THE REPORT ON HOW SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTIONS HAVE DENIED ALL CIVIL AND POLITICAL LIBERTIES TO THE GREAT MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA.

I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A FEW REMARKS REGARDING OUR COMMERCIAL AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH SOUTH AFRICA AND

OUR NUCLEAR POLICY TOWARDS THAT COUNTRY. IN VIEW OF
OUR DEEP CONCERN OVER THE TREND OF DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH
AFRICA IN THE LAST YEAR, WE ARE AT PRESENT REVIEWING OUR
ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL RELATIONS WITH SOUTH AFRICA.

WE ARE ACTIVELY REVIEWING OUR NUCLEAR POLICY AT PRESENT
AND HAVE HELD DISCUSSIONS WITH THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERN-
MENT AIMED AT DETERMINING WHETHER AND ON WHAT BASIS WE
MIGHT CONTINUE OUR NUCLEAR COOPERATION. WE WERE DEEPLY
CONCERNED BY RECENT REPORTS THAT SOUTH AFRICA INTENDED

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USIA-15 AF-10 ARA-14 EA-12 EUR-12 NEA-10 /137 W

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R 171923Z FEB 78

FM USMISSION GENEVA

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TO DETONATE A NUCLEAR DEVICE. WE HAVE SOUGHT AND
RECEIVED ASSURANCES FROM THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT
THAT IT DID NOT HAVE NOR DID IT INTEND TO DEVELOP A
NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVE DEVICE FOR ANY PURPOSE AND THAT THERE
WOULD BE NO EXPLOSIVE TESTING OF ANY KIND IN THAT
COUNTRY. WE ARE CONTINUING TO MONITOR THE SITUATION
CLOSELY.

ALL SHOULD BE AWARE THAT THE UNITED STATES IMPOSED AN
EMBARGO ON ALL SALES TO SOUTH AFRICA OF ARMS AND RELATED
MATERIAL IN 1963. I WOULD ALSO STRESS THAT MY GOVERNMENT
HAS GONE BEYOND THE SECURITY COUNCIL EMBARGO OF LAST
NOVEMBER AND HAS PROHIBITED ALL SHIPMENTS OF ANY GOODS
TO SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY AND POLICE FORCES, REGARDLESS
OF THE KIND OF MATERIAL INVOLVED.

WE ALSO SHARE THE DEEP EMOTION AND SENSE OF INDIGNATION
THAT OTHERS HERE HAVE EXPRESSED OVER THE DEPLORABLE
REALITY OF RACIAL INJUSTICE IN ALL OF THE COUNTRIES OF
SOUTHERN AFRICA THAT WE HAVE BEEN CONSIDERING. THERE

IS NO DISAGREEMENT AS TO THE CONTINUING EXISTENCE OF
SITUATIONS OF MASSIVE VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS. IN
THAT SENSE THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN QUESTIONS WE ARE
DISCUSSING ELICIT A UNIQUE CONSENSUS THAT THE SITUATIONS
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THERE ARE TO BE DEPLORED. WHAT SEEMS TO BE REALLY AT
ISSUE IS HOW TO CORRECT THOSE SITUATIONS. THERE ARE
QUITE OBVIOUSLY STRONGLY HELD AND DIFFERING POINTS OF
VIEW ON HOW THE INJUSTICES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA CAN BE
REMEDIED.

WE THINK THAT THERE SHOULD BE PRIMARY STRESS UPON
POSITIVE AND REALISTIC EFFORTS TO IMPROVE FUNDAMENTALLY
THE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN SOUTH AFRICA, NAMIBIA
AND ZIMBABWE. MY GOVERNMENT HAS FOR SOME TIME NOW BEEN
VIGOROUSLY ENGAGED IN WORKING FOR THE TRANSITION TO, AND
THE INSTITUTION OF, DEMOCRATIC RULE IN THE COUNTRIES OF
SOUTHERN AFRICA. WE INTEND TO PURSUE THESE EFFORTS TO A
SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION. WE INVITE THE ENCOURAGEMENT AND
SUPPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN THIS ENDEAVOR.
END QTE. VANDEN HEUVEL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: HUMAN RIGHTS, PROGRESS REPORTS, COMMITTEES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978GENEVA02546
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780075-0819
Format: TEL
From: GENEVA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780243/aaaabjud.tel
Line Count: 196
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: acfba2d4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION IO
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 feb 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3564615
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: 34TH HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION: US STATEMENT ON AGENDA ITEM 6 (PROGRESS REPORT OF THE AD HOC WORKING GROUP ON VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN SOUTHERN AF
TAGS: SHUM, UNHRC
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/acfba2d4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014